

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3582

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, ET
SUBJECT: WORLD CONFERENCE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION, GENEVA, AUGUST 14-25, 1978

REFS: (A) STATE 204786 (B) ADDIS ABABA 2955

SUMMARY. WE PROVIDED FOREIGN MINISTRY (MOFA) WITH
TEXT OF USG POSITION ON ZIONISM-RACISM LINKAGE,
BUT DOUBT IT WILL CHANGE ETHIOPIAN POSITION, WHICH
WE EXPECT TO BE CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH SOVIET, CUBAN
AND ARAB POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAD TEXT OF USG POSITION PROVIDED PARA 1 REFTEL DE-
LIVERED TO MOFA HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION
AUGUST 14, AND HAND CARRIED INFO COPY TO MOFA DEPUTY HEAD OF
AMERICAS DIVISION, TASSEW MAKONNEN. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO SEE
THE FORMER IN PERSON (HE HAS BEEN UNAVAILABLE FOR OVER TWO
WEEKS). TASSEW ASSURED US THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY BRING USG
VIEWS TO THE ATTENTION OF THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE, BUT COULD OFFER NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT ON WHAT
POSITION THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT (PMGSE) MIGHT TAKE ON THE
ZIONISM-RACISM LINKAGE AT GENEVA.

2. THE PMGSE POSITION ON THIS ISSUE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY
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BE ALIGNED WITH THAT OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS. LOCAL MEDIA
HAS RECENTLY BEEN FEATURING A SERIES OF ARTICLES AND COMMEN-
TARY (MOST RECENT WAS A LONG STUDY EQUATING ZIONISM,
RACISM AND IMPERIALISM BY GRASPAR GALLO, REPRINTED FROM GRANMA.
THE PMGSE CAN USUALLY BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THE SOVIET/CUBAN
LINE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS CLOSELY, EXCEPT IN THOSE CASES
WHERE IT HAS OVERRIDING INTERESTS OF ITS OWN OR IT SEES A

MATTER OF PRINCIPLE INVOLVED WHICH TOUCHES ON ITS OWN VITAL INTERESTS (REFTEL B).

3. FURTHER, THE PMGSE HAS CONSCIOUSLY TAKEN A LINE OF FULL SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE IN ORDER TO RENDER POLITICALLY MORE DIFFICULT ARAB SUPPORT FOR SOMALI IRREDENTISM IN THE OGADEN AND ASSISTANCE TO THE ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS.

4. IN THE ZIONISM-RACISM ISSUE, NO VITAL ETHIOPIAN INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE. WE, THEREFORE, EXPECT THE PMGSE TO ACT ON THIS ISSUE AS ONE WITH WHICH IT CAN USE TO REPAY SOVIET AND CUBAN ASSISTANCE WITH A POLITICAL GESTURE, WHICH ALSO MAY SERVE A USEFUL TACTICAL PURPOSE IN FURTHERING ETHIOPIA'S EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE ARAB SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA'S IMMEDIATE ENEMIES.

5. WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT THE USG VIEWPOINT TO BE REPORTED LOCALLY, AND WE EXPECT IT TO BE WIDELY MISREPRESENTED IN REPRINTED SOVIET COMMENTARY, AT LEAST THE SENIOR WORKING LEVEL AT THE MOFA WILL KNOW THAT OUR POSITION IS BASED ON PRINCIPLE AND THAT THE USG OPPOSES RACISM IN ALL ITS FORMS.

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